

## **They stood transfixed at the foot of the mountain. (19:17)**

As *Klal Yisrael* stood at the foot of *Har Sinai*, waiting anxiously for the Torah, they were united as one, with a sense of unity described by *Chazal* as, *k'ish echad, b'lev echad*, "like one man with one heart." This phrase has since become the catchword for describing unity at its apex. All of *Klal Yisrael* were focused, intent on accepting the Torah with a firm commitment, a common aspiration and uniform purpose. All of *Klal Yisrael* stood together as one to accept the Torah. It is the term *b'lev echad*, "with one heart", that begs to be elucidated. Does one heart manifest a stronger sense of unity than one brain? Why, then, is their unity not described thus: *k'ish echad b'moach echad*; "Like one man with one brain"?

Perhaps we might suggest the following: The brain controls the body's movements, while the heart is the seat of a person's passions, attitudes, emotions. To say that *Klal Yisrael* was united in mind implies that they were all doing the same thing which, in this circumstance, was accepting the Torah. They were all committed. It does not speak, however, to their individual level of emotion, their personal attitude, their individual desire. They might all be standing together, but were they all on the same page attitude-wise?

We are being told that not only was all of *Klal Yisrael* there, but they all wanted the same thing. They were united in attitude, emotion, purpose and commitment. This is why *k'ish echad, b'lev echad* is the paradigm of harmony among people. All too often we may discover that while two people stand together in purpose, in attitude they stand miles apart. Each will have his own individual reason for doing a *mitzvah*. For example, two people will give the same donation to *tzedakah*, but they are not unified in mind and spirit. One gives because he wants to help; the other gives because he seeks prominence. One gives because he believes in the goals and objectives of the organization or institution; the other gives out of embarrassment. One wants to remain anonymous; the other wants his name emblazoned on a plaque. To the public eye, they are both equal. Hashem, however, is *nireh l'leivav*, sees into the inner recesses of the heart. To be unified before Hashem is to be united in both mind and spirit.